Amendments to the Specification

On page 15, please replace the Abstract as follows:

~~The disclosed method and apparatus are for performing maintenance on a network access server having associated channels, the network access server being operatively coupled with a service request router, e.g. a telephone company (telco) switch. The method includes first determining whether off-line maintenance is needed on a network access server and if so then communicating a busy condition of any associated channel from the network access server to the telco switch. The method further includes monitoring any used associated channel until the used associated channel becomes unused. Thereafter, maintenance may be performed on the network access server. After completion of the maintenance, the method includes communicating an idle condition of any associated channel to the telco switch. For the duration of the maintenance on the given access server, new client service requests that may arrive during a busy condition of the network access server are auto-routed to another network access server operatively coupled with the telco switch.~~

~~The apparatus includes a maintenance scheduler for scheduling off-line maintenance for a given network access server. It further includes a channel usage monitor responsive to the scheduler for monitoring usage of the associated channels of the given network access server. Finally, a make-busy mechanism is provided that is responsive to the channel usage monitor and coupled with the telco switch. The make-busy mechanism signals the telco switch that all channels are busy, whereby maintenance is performed on the given network access server after the signaling and upon a determination by said channel usage monitor that no channel is currently in use. There is thus no discernible impact of maintenance on current or future users/clients, and maintenance may be scheduled even during peak use hours of operation of the network.~~ A method of performing maintenance on a network access server having associated channels carrying incoming digital or analog traffic determines whether maintenance is needed on a network access server and then communicating a busy condition of any unused associated channel from the network access server to the service request switch. Used channels are monitored for existing calls and when the used channel becomes substantially unused as indicated by defined digital and analog signaling protocol a busy condition is communicated from the network access server to the service request switch. An unused channel may be determined by usage falling below a predetermined threshold. Any remaining, existing calls are migrated to other network access servers. A signal is then sent to indicate that maintenance on the network access server can be performed and any new requests arriving during a busy condition of the network access server are routed to another network access server.

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On page 9, line 3 please replace the paragraph as follows:

"When it is determined that maintenance is needed, a busy signal representing the make-busy condition of each unused channel of given access server 12a is communicated at 102 to router or switch 28. At 104, it is determined whether channels that may have been in use when maintenance was invoked are now no longer in use. If the channel is still in use, it is determined at 103 if the usage falls below a predetermined threshold due to lingering access, as discussed above. If the usage falls below a predetermined threshold, the calls a disconnected at 105. If the usage has not fallen below a predetermined threshold, the calls are migrated to other network access servers at 107.

As described above, interface 38 is updated continuously to signal switch 28 the progressively 'busy' condition of the channels. In other words, blocks 104, 102 represent awaiting termination of use of any remaining associated channels of the given access server and communicates a busy condition thereof to the service request router. When all channels of given access server 12a are idle, and have been made-busy by communicating their busy condition to router or switch 28, maintenance is performed at 106."

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